

Applic. No. 10/776,361

Amdt. dated January 6, 2006

Reply to Office action of October 6, 2005

Remarks/Arguments:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-5 are now in the application. Claims 1-4 have been amended. Claim 5 has been amended. Support for claim 5 can be found in Figs. 3 and 4. No new matter has been added.

In item 1 on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, claims 1-4 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by Eitel et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,133,543) (hereinafter "Eitel") under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

The rejection has been noted and the claims have been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application. The claims are patentable for the reasons set forth below. Support for the changes is found in Figs. 3 and 4 of the instant application.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 1 calls for, *inter alia*:

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the feed table having ventilation openings formed therein directly underneath the continuous region between the rows of suction openings.

The Eitel reference discloses an apparatus for conveying sheets via two conveyor belts (4). A table (1) includes compensation bore holes (61 and 62) provided between the conveyor belts (4). Each of the belts includes perforations (7), which overlie suction bore holes (2) in the surface (6) of the table (1).

The reference does not show the feed table having ventilation openings formed therein directly underneath the continuous region between the rows of suction openings, as recited in claim 1 of the instant application. The Eitel reference discloses a suction belt that has perforations formed therein. The perforations overly suction bore holes formed in the surface of the table. Eitel reference discloses compensation bore holes that are disposed between the belts. The Eitel reference does not disclose that the table has ventilation holes formed therein directly underneath a continuous region of a belt. This is contrary to the invention of the instant application as claimed, in which the feed table has ventilation openings formed therein directly underneath the continuous region between the rows of suction openings.

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New claim 5 will be discussed with respect to the Eitel reference as well.

Claim 5 calls for, *inter alia*:

a suction belt disposed to be guided over the feed table and having at least two mutually spaced-apart rows of suction openings formed therein, each of the rows of the suction openings aligned with a respective one of the spaced-apart rows of suction apertures.

Furthermore, claim 5 recites that the ventilation openings are formed in the feed table in a region between said suction apertures. Accordingly, the ventilation openings must also be disposed between the two mutually spaced-apart rows of the suction openings in the single suction belt.

The reference does not show a suction belt disposed to be guided over the feed table and having at least two mutually spaced-apart rows of suction openings formed therein, each of the rows of the suction openings aligned with a respective one of the spaced-apart rows of suction apertures, as recited in claim 5 of the instant application. The Eitel reference discloses two belts that are guided over the feed table. Each

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belt has suction perforations aligned with a row of suction openings in the table. Eitel does not disclose a suction belt having at least two mutually spaced-apart rows of suction openings formed therein each of the rows of the suction openings aligned with respective spaced-apart rows of suction apertures. Eitel does not disclose ventilation openings in a feed table that are disposed between two mutually spaced-apart rows of suction openings in a single belt. This is contrary to the invention of the instant application as claimed, in which a suction belt is disposed to be guided over the feed table and has at least two mutually spaced-apart rows of suction openings formed therein, each of the rows of the suction openings is aligned with a respective one of the spaced-apart rows of suction apertures.

Since claim 5 is believed to be allowable, dependent claims 2-4 are believed to be allowable as well.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claims 1 or 5. Claims 1 and 5 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claim 5, they are believed to be patentable as well.

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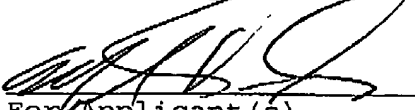
In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of
claims 1-5 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims
to be unpatentable, counsel respectfully requests a telephone
call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked
out.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition
for extension is herewith made.

Please charge any other fees which might be due with respect
to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner &
Greenberg P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,



For Applicant(s)

AKD:cgm

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